

## It's All Perception

People talk about "Eastern thought" and "Western thought." Why do we divide up the world? It's a round Earth, and it goes around and around.

I'm talking about something universal. What is real is that we are all human beings. We have put these layers upon ourselves, but these layers are not real. There is no East, and there is no West. Don't just look at the face and skin color. Our different faces are like flowers in a garden. If they were all the same color, it would be very monotonous. All the different colors—the pinks, greens, reds, yellows, browns—are what make the garden pretty.

But we look at the faces and say, "You are different." There are people who love the East and hate the West or people who love the West and hate the East. That chasm is getting bigger and bigger, when it should be getting smaller and smaller. We can all help each other. We don't have to be divided by our religions or our beliefs, by what we think. If we want to follow traditions, we should be able to follow traditions. All that everybody needs and wants is elbow room—a little room to move.



Personally, I don't like divisions. People are people—every single one. We are human beings—not made in China or the USA but by that power that created everything. We should be proud of the fact that we are alive, that we are human. We should be educated to have more tolerance for each other. After all, we live on one planet. You know, if you live in a house with others, you've got to be friends with everyone. Well, we *do* live in one house. It's called planet Earth. Here it is. And it's the only one.

If you don't like your house, you can move out. But where are you going to move from planet Earth? To Mars? You'll be cooked and frozen, cooked and frozen—like a TV dinner. This is the house we all live in. Instead, we can make it more tolerable. When it rains, whether it is on a desert in India or Africa, it's the same rain, and it makes the flowers bloom the same way. We are not that different. At the end of the day, we really aren't. And who we are is not a bad thing; it's a good thing. It's a very good thing.

Somebody I visited had a sticker on their refrigerator that said, "Smile," and when I asked them why, they said, "Oh, it's nice to be reminded." Nice to be reminded to smile? You're a human being. This is what you do. When things are right, it is automatic. You don't need to be reminded to smile. It will come naturally. When all is right inside, a smile will happen.

Some people want a garden year-round, so they buy fake grass, fake flowers, fake trees to make a garden. Then they say, "Look at my garden! It's great, isn't it? It looks like this year-round, and I don't have to mow the grass." Yes, but where are the butterflies and the bees? Where is the aroma of the flowers? Your garden may look great, but it's not really your garden. Do you want your garden to look great even if it's not a real garden?

Be real—for yourself. Don't live in this fake fantasy. You are here for too short a time to pretend. If you want to fly, then *really* fly. Because you can. You don't have to pretend. Pretending doesn't go very far. And you're not here for that long.

A lot of young people think life will go on and on for a long time. Ask people who have been alive for quite a while how quickly life goes by. It's all perception. Remember when you were young? Your Mom or Dad would be driving the car, and 15 minutes was too long. Now you say, "We're already there?" It's all about perception.

You finally start to recognize the value of time when it gets less and less. Not a smart thing. Understand the value of time now. The best way to understand it is to be content as much as you can be. Then you have conquered time. Then you have understood what you have been given—the most incredible gift of life.



**Prem Rawat**